

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of consolidating multiple models, wherein each model
2 comprises only rules that define a non-cyclic chain of dependencies among families
3 and features of families and include at least one rule having a constraint that
4 references a non-ancestral family to the constraint, the method comprising:
5 combining the models into a single, consolidated model that maintains the
6 non-cyclic chain of dependencies among families and features of
7 families.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 detecting any inconsistencies between rules included in the consolidated
3 model; and
4 attempting to resolve any detected inconsistencies.

1 3. A system for consolidating multiple models, wherein each model
2 comprises only rules that define a non-cyclic chain of dependencies among families
3 and features of families and include at least one rule having a constraint that
4 references a non-ancestral family to the constraint, the system comprising:
5 a model consolidation module to combine the models into a single,
6 consolidated model that maintains the non-cyclic chain of
7 dependencies among families and features of families.

1 4. A computer program product having instructions encoded therein to
2 consolidate multiple models, wherein each model comprises only rules that define a
3 non-cyclic chain of dependencies among families and features of families and include
4 at least one rule having a constraint that references a non-ancestral family to the
5 constraint, the instructions comprising code to:
6 combine the models into a single, consolidated model that maintains the non-
7 cyclic chain of dependencies among families and features of families.